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The Congolese Teapot

The Congo crisis which brought American planes and troops rushing to President Mobutu's rescue from invaders and territorial attacks led by white mercenaries was a slight exaggeration, according to on-the-spot report in the British press.

The invaders and the white civilians uprising, like Congo's unity, were mythical, and the mercenaries were white soldiers in the pay of the Congolese government. They joined indigenous troops in an insurrection.

News of what really happens in the Congo sometimes travels slowly, so some time may pass before the full story is known. Speculation is that the revolt was a protest against the piratical capture of former Prime Minister Tshombe, whom Mobutu wants returned to the Congo for a public hanging.

"The manner in which the kidnapping was arranged," said *The London Observer*, "has led to speculation, notably in Belgium and Alge-

ria, that it was the work of the United States Central Intelligence Agency which has made spectacular intrusions into Congolese affairs in the past. It is true that the U.S. has lately come out in strong support of Mobutu's regime, but if the CIA had wanted Tshombe out of the way, it could probably have devised some less tortuous method."

We knew of one disillusioned white mercenary who fought in the Congo. When asked why he volunteered, he had a one-word reply, "Money." And why did he quit? "Because I couldn't stand the native food, and besides, they didn't pay me."

The mercenaries who joined the native insurrectionists may have been merely objecting to broken government promises of compensation. When the real fighting started, some of them marched away, taking with them all the money from the Kisangani bank.